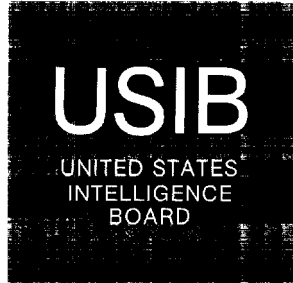


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ETHIOPIA

The ruling military council yesterday announced a program designed to provide ideological guidelines and an institutional framework for its efforts to transform Ethiopia into a socialist state.

Major Mengistu Hailemariam, the council's first vice chairman, outlined the "national democratic revolutionary program" yesterday in a nationwide radio and television speech. The selection of Mengistu to make the speech is further evidence that he has assumed a dominant position in the faction-ridden council. This was the first time a single council member has announced an important new policy.

The program commits the government to eliminating feudalism and imperialism, with the ultimate aim of establishing a "people's democratic republic." The proclamation outlines a broad program for building a socialist economy. It proposes to extend government control to large transport companies and export trade. Some private enterprise will be allowed, but under government supervision.

A workers' political party is to be developed to spearhead the effort to transform Ethiopian society. The program approves the organization of other parties committed to the "struggle against imperialism and feudalism," but special assistance will be given the workers' party, and it is to have the pre-eminent position.

The government says it intends to grant regional autonomy to ethnic minorities, with each group having the right to elect its own administrators and to determine its own economic and social life. This declaration of intent is not likely to result in a significant transfer of economic or political power to the provinces. Although the minorities may be allowed to elect local officials, and be given greater control over locally collected taxes, the council will probably insist that the candidates and their policies conform to the "revolutionary program."

The regional autonomy program is unlikely to provide the basis for peaceful settlement of the guerrilla war in Eritrea Province. Many Eritreans would probably have been willing to seek an accommodation several years ago, but the military's ruthless prosecution of the war over the last 14 months has increased the Eritreans' animosity toward the government. The council, in fact, is pushing ahead with plans to send settlers into Eritrea to displace the local population.

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ROMANIA-EGYPT

Bucharest did its best to give political support to Egypt during War Minister Gamasy's visit to Romania last week but did not offer major military assistance.

The Romanian press devoted lavish coverage to Gamasy's visit. He talked twice with President Ceausescu, held long discussions with Defense Minister Ionita, and toured several Romanian arms production facilities. Ceausescu reportedly treated Gamasy to a classic lecture on independence, noting that small and medium-sized countries must unite to avoid being "swallowed up" by the Soviet Union. Ceausescu and Ionita reportedly praised Egypt's abrogation of the friendship treaty with the USSR, and both candidly described Bucharest's efforts to fend off Soviet pressure.

The Romanians are not capable of supplying Egypt with the sizable quantities of sophisticated military hardware the Egyptians need. Moreover, most of that which Romania does produce is restricted by licensing arrangements with the USSR.



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COLOMBIA

The ruling Liberal Party reaffirmed its pre-eminence in Colombian politics by winning slightly more than 50 percent of the very light vote in Sunday's departmental and municipal elections.

The Conservative Party, the country's only other major political force, did surprisingly well, picking up an estimated 40 percent of the vote—some 10 percent more than party officials had expected. The two parties on the far left did not do as well as some political observers had expected; their combined total was only 3 percent of the vote.

The Liberal Party established that it is the party to beat in the national election in 1978. The race between former president Carlos Lleras and Ambassador to the US Julio Cesar Turbay for the party's presidential nomination was inconclusive. Lleras, who conducted a vigorous campaign, won handily in Bogota; Turbay, who did not campaign at all, did well in the countryside. Both remain leading contenders to replace President Lopez.

Although the significance of the elections is difficult to gauge because of the light voter turnout, Colombians have once again rejected the radical policies and promises of the far left for the slower but more stable policies of the traditional democratic institutions, the Liberal and Conservative parties. The election results are also a victory for President Lopez, who has been counseling moderation and patience at a time of labor and student unrest and political kidnappings and assassinations.



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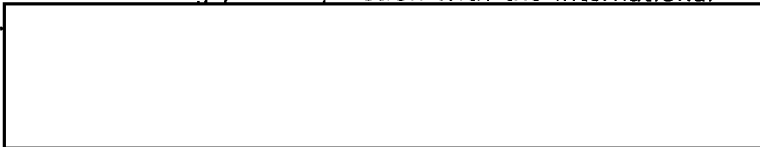
USSR

The 21st Soviet Antarctic expedition, which began late last October, ended this month. The last of the five participating ships—two involved in research, two for support, and one for passengers—have departed Antarctica for home.

As many as 30 Soviet institutes, laboratories, and other enterprises reportedly were connected with the expedition. Research centered largely on geophysics, with emphasis on meteorology, glaciology, and oceanography. Ionospheric, geomagnetic, geodetic, geologic, and biological research also received attention. Many of the scientific efforts have military applications.

The Soviets have conducted a wide range of research investigations in the Antarctic for over two decades. They operate seven permanent research stations, including one that provides an extensive observation net completely encircling the Antarctic continent. Temporary stations are periodically constructed to facilitate study in remote areas.

This year's expedition was tasked to construct a temporary base at Druzhnaya, on the Weddell Sea coast. From there, the Soviets reportedly launched helicopter expeditions into the seldom-explored mountainous region bordering the Weddell Sea and conducted geological, seismological, and astronomical studies, as well as topogeodetic photography. The Soviets also conducted hydrometeorological research in the vicinity of the Drake Passage, in conjunction with the international Southern Polar Experiment.



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FOR THE RECORD

ROMANIA-YUGOSLAVIA: Presidents Ceausescu and Tito are now "practically set" to meet in Yugoslavia in early June, according to a senior Yugoslav diplomat. This will be the first full-fledged Yugoslav-Romanian summit in almost two years. The two leaders will probably coordinate their positions on the European communist party conference, which—according to the Romanians—could take place as early as June. They are also likely to discuss the current political climate in Moscow and ways to thwart heightened Soviet pressures for conformity. Ceausescu will push Tito to endorse observer status for Romania at the nonaligned summit in August.

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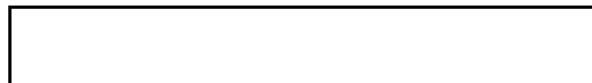
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BANGLADESH-UK: Bangladesh will purchase the British frigate HMS Llandeff—a 2,200-ton ship armed with two 40-mm. guns, two 4.5-inch guns, and antisubmarine depth charges. Dacca reportedly will pay \$3.5 million for the 1958-vintage vessel. The frigate will be the only major combatant in the small Bengalee navy. The fleet now consists of three locally produced river patrol boats, two Indian 150-ton seaward defense boats, and several Yugoslav gunboats.



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